

**Osoyoos Indian Band Nk'mip Desert and Heritage Centre
Rattlesnake Program and Managing Snakes in Agricultural Settings -
An Okanagan-Similkameen Stewardship Program Project**

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The Nk'mip Desert and Heritage Centre provides on-site cultural tours, programs, and interactive displays reflecting the unique and contemporary experience of a desert centre based on the rich heritage of the Okanagan people. The rattlesnake program incorporates research, education, and an outreach component. Rattlesnakes are pit tagged, and their sightings recorded and mapped. In August 2002, a pilot radio-telemetry study was initiated in which 3 rattlesnakes were tracked from August through to the end of October. The snakes translocated 1.5 km or less from the Campground or the Desert Centre grounds. Two of three snakes found appropriate hibernacula sites, and one of the remaining two snakes was persecuted in spring 2003. Long term goals of this study are to determine if translocated snakes survive relocation to a new home range, if they move around on a day to day basis in the same manner as snakes that have not been translocated, and if they end up as road-killed snakes while attempting to return to their original home range.

A demonstration project at Tinhorn Creek Vineyards in the south Okanagan is intended to raise awareness about the value of snakes and appropriate snake management techniques including snake barrier fencing and creation of artificial cover objects to attract snakes and reduce encounters. Several materials are being produced and vineyard owners/managers and tree fruit growers in the Okanagan and lower Similkameen are to be invited to view the demo project. This project has received considerable support from the BC Agriculture Council's Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative, the BC's Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program and The Land Conservancy of BC.